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CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

CAPITAL SHIVERS UNDER COLD WAVE

Commuters on Kartavya Path near India Gate, New Delhi on Tuesday morning. Parts of the national capital reeled under a cold wave as dense fog blotted out the sun on Tuesday, lowering visibility to just about 50 metres and affecting road traffic as well as train movement | PARVEEN NEGI

India Inc braces for China impact

Key sectors are watching the Covid situation, stocking up raw materials to avoid a crisis

MONIKA YADAV & ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

THE surge in Covid-19 cases in China has Indian manufacturers and traders worrying about another disruption in the supply chain like the one witnessed during the earlier Covid waves in 2020 and 2021.

Indian trade bodies are monitoring the Covid situation in China as there has been a massive surge in Covid cases there. China is the biggest trading partner of India and the latter imports important items such as mobile phones, electronic items, automotive parts, semiconductors, chemicals, pharmaceutical products, among others.

"So far, whatever we had ordered, we got it on time. However, we are monitoring the situation closely. We will have to wait for a few more days to know the exact impact," said A Sakthivel, president, Federation of Indian Export Organisations.

Sudarshan Jain, secretary-general, Indian Pharmaceutical Association, said the Covid outbreak in China is a matter of concern and pharma firms are watching the supply chain and inventories of medicines.

"Learning from the lockdowns in three years has been immense and companies have been keeping adequate stock of active pharmaceutical ingredients, finished product formulations and channel availability... The API prices have increased significantly ever since Covid hit us. We are anticipating fluctuations in API pricing," Jain added.

India imported $60 bn worth of goods from China in the first seven months of the current financial year, compared with $8.8 bn it exported to China.

The operations of automobile manufacturers, especially of electric vehicle makers, may get impacted if the situation in China deteriorates, but industry insiders say that as of now, the impact is not prominent.

Some firms have diversified their supply chain to minimise impact but most of the sector is still dependent on China for crucial parts, said a senior executive of an auto component company, who did not wish to be named.

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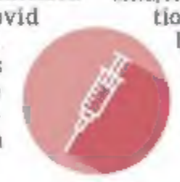

Bharat Biotech's nasal vax

Hyderbad-based Bharat Biotech's intranasal Covid vaccine will be priced at ₹800 (excluding GST) for private markets and ₹325 (excluding GST) for govt hospitals, the company said on Tuesday | P9

State health dept for restrictions on air travel

With Covid cases rising across the world, the Karnataka Health Department has sought the imposition of curbs on air travel from high-risk countries like China, the US, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. The state government is taking all possible measures to ensure that the situation is contained before it worsens. However, they are still suggesting restrictions on international travel from high-risk countries. P3

Maha eyes 865 villages, Bommai says not an inch

NAUSHAD BIJAPUR @ Belagavi

CUTTING across party lines, Karnataka government and opposition leaders unanimously slammed a controversial resolution passed by the Maharashtra Legislative Council on Tuesday demanding the inclusion of 865 Karnataka villages into Maharashtra.

Hitting out at the Maharashtra government, Chief Minister Basvaraj Bommai said, "We strongly condemn the resolution. We are bound by the decision taken under the State Reorganisation Act, 1956. People on both sides are living happily, but the boundary issue is being raked up by Maharashtra for political reasons time and again. It is a habit of Maharashtra to pass such resolutions."

The CM made it clear that there is no question of Karnataka parting with even an inch of its land and said that his government is committed to protecting the interests of Kannadigas. He said that a case on the border dispute is in the Supreme Court and his government has complete faith in the court.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai in Suvarna Vidhana Soudha on Tuesday

"The Karnataka Assembly passed a resolution of not giving its land to other states, but at the same time, Maharashtra announces in its Council that it will take away our land. The controversial resolution passed by Maharashtra is against the spirit of federal structure," he said.

Condemning Maharashtra's move, Leader of Opposition in Karnataka Assembly Siddaramaiah said the resolution does not have any legal sanctity.

KPCC president DK Shivakumar termed Maharashtra government's move "politically motivated" and said even a single village from Karnataka will not go to Maharashtra. "We (Congress party) are with the state government in all measures being taken with regard to the boundary dispute," he said. P4

Bill passed on authority to handle transport, traffic in B'luru

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS @ Belagavi

TO bring all transport and allied departments under a single umbrella to decongest and manage traffic better in Bengaluru, the Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority Bill 2022 (BMLTA) was adopted by the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday.

The Bill covers 279 sqkm of Bengaluru Metropolitan area and is a precursor to a similar Bill at the central level, where all departments concerned with the transport will be brought under one roof, said Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister JC Madhu Swamy, who introduced the piece of legislation.

The Bill will come into effect immediately with the CM being its ex-officio chairperson, Bengaluru development and transport ministers being vice-chairmen and the chief secretary and other officials concerned with the transport department being ex-officio members. P4

Putin critic's death accidental: Autopsy

SIBA MOHANTY @ Bhubaneswar

WHAT was thought of as the unfortunate deaths of two Russian tourists at a hotel in the non-descript Rayagada district of Odisha till Monday, assumed international spotlight after one of them turned out to be a billionaire and powerful lawmaker from that country.

Pavel Antov (65), who allegedly fell from his hotel terrace on December 24, was a business tycoon and member of the Vladimir legislative assembly. With his being a Putin critic over the Ukraine invasion, the international glare was immediate. It prompted the Odisha government to order a Crime Branch investigation.

Pavel Antov

Two days before Antov's death, his friend Vladimir Bydanov died of cardiac arrest in the same hotel. Police sources told this newspaper that the post mortem report of Antov indicated 'accidental' death.

Bydanov had succumbed to cardiac arrest due to excessive consumption of intoxicants on December 22, they said.

Antov, whose company Vladimir Standart group's estimated earning stood at 9.97 billion rubles — translating to about $157 million — was travelling in Odisha with Bydanov and another Russian couple Mikhail Turov and Natalia Panasenko to usher in his 66th birthday. P10

EXPRESS READ

Allahabad HC quashes UP govt notification on OBC reservation

Lucknow: The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday quashed the Uttar Pradesh government's draft notification on ULB polls and ordered it to hold them without reservation for the OBCs. The Lucknow bench of the HC ordered that the government should notify the polls 'immediately' as the term of several municipalities would end by January 31. But, CM Yogi Adityanath said the elections will be announced only after finding a way out to provide the OBC reservation. P9

4,483 houses damaged in Assam hailstorm

Dibrugarh/Tinsukia: A hailstorm swept through areas of upper Assam, damaging nearly 4,500 houses, officials said on Tuesday. According to Assam State Disaster Management Authority, 4,483 houses were damaged across 132 villages in Dibrugarh, Charaideo, Sivasagar and Tinsukia districts, affecting around 18,000 people.

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PM's brother, kin hurt in crash near Mysuru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's brother Prahlad Modi and four of his family members escaped with minor injuries when the car in which they were travelling met with an accident at Kadakola in Mysuru taluk on Tuesday afternoon. The family was on its way to Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Chamarajanagar district.

Police said that Satyanarayana, the driver of the SUV in which Prahlad was travelling, felt drowsy and failed to notice the road divider on the lane and crashed into it. The impact was such that the front right wheel of the car got separated from the vehicle. All the airbags in the car got deployed due to the impact avoiding serious injuries to passengers.

While Prahlad, his son Mehul, daughter-in-law Jinal and grandson Maharath were in a Mercedes-Benz SUV, his daughter Sonal and son-in-law Virag were in another SUV. Prahlad sustained a small scratch on his face, his son had minor injuries in the leg and hand. Prahlad's daughter-in-law sustained a cut near her eye-brow and the six-year-old grandson received a minor fracture on his left leg. The family travelled from Ahmedabad to Hyderabad and from there flew to Bengaluru on December 26. P10

Prahlad Modi (above), who sustained injuries in an accident (top) near Mysuru on Tuesday

The doctors said that Prahlad Modi and his family members will be in hospital for two more days. The PMO and CMO have been informed about the incident.

SA Ramadas, BJP MLA

AILING NONAGENARIAN

Kannada flag maker's wife denied pension

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

KAMALAMMA Ramamurthy (95), wife of Ma Ramamurthy who designed the red-and-yellow Kannada flag and unfurled it for the first time in Bengaluru in the early 60s, has been denied old-age pension by the Kannada and Culture Department. The nonagenarian had approached the department seeking pension on health grounds.

Hailing from Nanjangud, Kamalamma had moved to Bengaluru after her marriage. Her husband Ramamurthy played an important role in Kannada movement in the 60s.

In the flag which he designed exclusively for Karnataka, yellow symbolises Arishina (turmeric) and red represents Kumkuma (vermilion), both considered sacred.

Ramamurthy used to walk across the city, almost everyday, carrying the flag to popularise it. However, in a tragic incident, he and his sons died while digging a well in the early 60s. Since then, Sharadamma has been living in an ashram in Bengaluru. As a tribute to the great man, a locality in East Bengaluru, Ramamurthynagar, was named after him.

Former CM SM Krishna on Monday wrote a letter to CM Basavaraj Bommai urging him to provide financial aid for Kamalamma's medical expenses.

When contacted, Kannada and Culture Minister Sunil Kumar said he is not aware of the matter and would look into it.

As Kamalamma has no children, neither any relatives, she is staying in an old age home. She is suffering from age-related ailments, which need treatment.

Former CM S M Krishna in a letter to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai